

STEP SEVEN EVIDENCE STORAGE

FOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER:

- Air-dry wet items prior to packaging.
- Use separate paper bags when packaging evidence; do not use plastic bags.
- Seal bags with tape, not staples.
- Transport sex crimes kit & all other evidence to MSP Crime Lab.
- Transport urine, blood & vomit to the Health and Environmental Testing Lab ASAP.
- Anonymous sex crimes kits and all other evidence must be kept at least 90 days at the law enforcement agency in the town/city where the hospital is located.
- The sex crimes kit does not require refrigeration or freezing.
- Urine and vomit should be frozen if possible, otherwise refrigerate.
- Blood vials should be refrigerated (will explode if frozen).
- Store in a secure area.
- If the victim is unconscious, notify the D.A. that an anonymous sex crimes kit is being held.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Male victims may have difficulty speaking about the assault.
- Elderly victims may also have difficulty speaking about the assault; risk of assault-related injury is greater among elderly victims.
- Same-gender assault does not mean the victim or the perpetrator is homosexual.
- Individuals with developmental disabilities or mental illness are at high risk; speak slowly and calmly using clear and easy to understand language; do not assume they are not credible.
- Whenever possible, use professional interpretation services.
- People with a physical challenge (speech, hearing, etc.) may not have a developmental disability.
- Consider cultural background.
- Minors can consent to a medical forensic examination without parental notification.
- Comply with mandatory reporting requirements to Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services and your DA.

These are guidelines. Every case is different. These guidelines are to be considered minimum standards. Individual District Attorneys may distribute more comprehensive instructions.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE STATEWIDE TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Line

1-800-871-7741

TTY: 1-888-458-5599

Maliseet Sexual Assault Services

207-532-6401

Passamaquoddy Peaceful Relations

Program Hotline

877-853-2613

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

2-1-1 Maine, Resource Referrals

2-1-1

Adult Protective Services

800-624-8404

TTY: 800-963-9490

Child Protective Services

800-452-1999

TTY: 800-963-9490

Domestic Violence Hotline

866-834-4357

Health & Environmental Testing Lab

207-287-2727

Maine State Police Crime Lab

207-624-7017

Mental Health Crisis

888-568-1112

TTY: 800-606-0215

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GUIDELINES for ADULT & ADOLESCENT SEXUAL ASSAULT



PRODUCED BY THE STATEWIDE
SART GUIDELINES COMMITTEE

Endorsed by the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Maine Prosecutors Association, the Maine Sheriffs' Association, and the Maine State Police



24-Hour Confidential Statewide Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Line:
1-800-871-7741 (TTY: 1-888-458-5599).

LAW ENFORCEMENT FIRST RESPONSE

STEP ONE ATTEND TO THE VICTIM

- Explain you are there to help.
- Apply first aid as needed.
- Inform the victim of advocacy services; for an advocate call: 1-800-871-7741 or TTY: 1-888-458-5599.
- Avoid conveying judgment or blame; reassure the victim that it is not her or his fault.
- Consider the physical & psychological trauma that has been endured; victims may have varying emotional or behavioral responses.
- To preserve evidence, request that the victim not smoke, drink, eat, brush teeth, bathe, shower, douche, urinate or defecate; have victim bring clothing worn and ask victim to bring change of clothing.
- Encourage medical treatment for injury, STDs, pregnancy, etc., regardless of how much time has passed since the assault; explain that forensic evidence can be collected at the hospital, if the victim chooses.
- Call the health care facility in advance and note if the victim has special needs (interpreter, etc.).
- If ambulance is required, notify EMS personnel of need to preserve as much evidence as possible without hindering treatment.
- If suspect needs medical treatment, take to a different hospital than the victim (if available); if taken to the same facility, inform hospital and keep separate.
- Inform the victim that if evidence is collected by use of the sex crimes kit, the cost of the sexual assault medical forensic exam is free.

Drugs used to facilitate sexual assault are excreted quickly from the body and specimens should be collected at the hospital ASAP. However, other types of forensic evidence have been found as late as two weeks after the assault.

STEP TWO NOTIFY SUPERVISOR & D.A.'s Office (as appropriate)

STEP THREE SECURE THE CRIME SCENE

- Secure all crime scenes for further processing (assault scene, clothing, bedding, etc.); Remember that the bodies of the victim and suspect are crime scenes.
- Additional officers may be needed for responding to multiple crime scenes.

STEP FOUR GATHER INFORMATION

- Afford the victim whatever privacy is available.
- Limit traffic over police radio that could identify the victim.
- If possible, have the same officer stay with the victim until the case is transferred to an investigator (if appropriate).

- Record observations: Victim's physical appearance, emotional demeanor, injuries, damage to clothing, etc.
- Describe the scene in detail. Remember: Who, what, where, when & how.
- Avoid questioning by multiple officers; in depth questioning should be conducted by the primary investigator unless the same officer will be conducting the entire investigation; limit questions to pertinent information.
- Obtain suspect information (physical description, clothing, vehicle, direction of flight, weapon, etc.); Transmit a radio alert when appropriate.
- Identify witnesses: Contact information; statements (if appropriate).
- Police reports should focus on observations rather than conclusions.

STEP FIVE AT THE HOSPITAL

If you suspect drug facilitated sexual assault, inform the hospital personnel upon arrival.

FOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER:

- Police interview should be conducted without medical personnel present.
- The presence of a sexual assault advocate is advisable; they will provide their name and agency information.
- Note if there is anyone else in room (friend, parent, etc.).

STEP SIX EVIDENCE COLLECTION

- Prevent cross-contamination by using standard up-to-date practices (i.e. change gloves after collecting each article of evidence).
- Photographs of all injuries including ano-genital injuries and injuries to the breast(s) should be taken by a health care provider, preferably a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE).
- Bruising may not immediately appear; encourage victim to obtain follow-up photographs, most of which may be taken by an officer; photographs of ano-genital or breast area bruising should be taken by a health care provider, preferably a SAFE, and if possible the provider who took the initial photographs.
- Collect clothing worn at the time of the assault as well as the first change of clothes (especially undergarments) if not collected by medical personnel; keep in mind the victim may have changed between the time of the assault and reporting.

FOR INVESTIGATING OFFICER:

The suspect is also a crime scene; collect forensic evidence and suspect clothing as necessary with consent or search warrant; use suspect kit.

Suspect kit available at Maine State Police Crime Lab.

